

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

Monday, September 27, 2004

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Bloomfield, Kirk, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, and Spraul-Schmidt present. Absent: Chatterjee and Wallace

MINUTES

The minutes of the Monday, September 13, 2004 meeting were unanimously approved as corrected (Motion by Raser, second by Kirk).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 26 MERCER STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE, HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Raser recused himself. Staff member Ms. Adrienne Cowden presented a proposal to the Historic Conservation Board for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the building at 26 Mercer Street. The building is a two-story single family Italianate row house, a contributing resource in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District

In July, 2003 OTR Walnut Housing, Ltd, purchased the residence and a year later in August, 2004 Building and Inspections condemned the building citing issues with the roof, water damage, bulging in the east exterior brick wall and foundation. B & I ordered the owner to remedy the dangerous and unsafe conditions or remove the structure.

The owner/applicant Mr. Richard M. Hildal, OTR Walnut Housing, Ltd. is present to answered questions from the Board. The owner claimed the building is economically unfeasible to renovate and presented documentation that details the condition of the present structure, and based on estimated construction and loan cost, a rental rate of \$1,200 per month (which staff believes is overly priced for the area) and a negative annual cash flow of \$5,492 per year corroborated the decision for demolition.

OTR Walnut Housing, Ltd is currently assembling property on Mercer and Walnut Streets for a new housing project; 3CDC (Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation) has identified the site as a possible location for the new Washington Park School. Staff believes the condition of the building and the costs associated with its renovation justifies the requested demolition.

Ms. Sullebarger stated it is always disappointing to receive requests for demolition of a historic site, however, it is not very visible being on a side street, so it will not have a major impact on the district; the applicant has proven economic hardship.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second Kirk, Raser abstained) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of 26 Mercer Street, finding that OTR Walnut Housing, Ltd. has submitted the necessary documentation to demonstrate that a reasonable economic return cannot be realized from the use of all or part of the building at 26 Mercer Street, on the condition that any new construction on the cleared site shall be approved by the Historic Conservation Board prior to construction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCES, FOR 122-124 W. 14TH STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member, Ms. Caroline Kellam stated that the project consist of two sites; a vacant lot for parking at 122 W. 14 Street, and at 124 W. 14 Street a roof top garden to be constructed on the rehab building.

Staff stated the Historic Conservation staff reviewed and approved the rehabilitation work and granted a building permit based on the guidelines for the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Staff acknowledged that the rooftop garden was not included in the original permit and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required.

Staff stated the parking lot along the south edge of W. 14th Street will feature a 6' wrought iron fence and the rear property line will have a 6' stained wood privacy fence and needed zoning variances. The parking lot is not screened from public view for issues of safety; additional screening is not applicable. She emphasized that many surface parking lots in the area have wrought iron fences and no screening.

The Department of Transportation has several issues with the design of the parking lot, which may result in decreasing the number and size of the spaces in relation to the width of the alley; this is not under the Boards' purview.

Ms. Martha Dorff, owner and developer is present to respond to questions by the Board.

In reply to Mr. Kreider's question, the Urban Conservator, Skip Forwood stated the screening requirement is for a solid fence, solid wall, which is one part of the code and the other part, is fifty per cent transparent.

In reply to Mr. Raser, staff stated there is no additional information on steel or wood fences. Ms. Martha Dorff replied that the intention of the fence on the south side is to screen the parking lot, not to abstain from the view of the street for safety reasons; the fence is not in detail but is decorative. Ms. Dorff stated on the northeast side of the lot will be a solid door fence with a flat top, for privacy.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion Sullebarger, second Kirk with revision) to take the following action:

1. Grant a zoning variance for relief from the Parking Lot Screening requirements as per Chapter 1425-27 and 1425-29 (a) of the Cincinnati Zoning Code finding that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and
 - a) Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of the rooftop garden and parking lot as per plans submitted dated 9/8/04.
3. If parking lot plan is revised, plans are to be approved by the Urban Conservator.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCES, 1650 CENTRAL PARKWAY, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Kirk recused himself from discussion. Staff member, Ms. Caroline Kellam said Mercy Health Partners is proposing renovation of the former Globe Furniture Building at the corner of Logan and Elder Streets. The first and second floor will be the new location

for St Johns Social Services. The building is a non-contributing building within the historic district of Over-the-Rhine. The new facility will provide social services to the community. The applicant will lease both the building and the parking lot for 20 to 25 employees, which is accessory to the property.

Staff stated the proposal for the parking lot between Logan Street and the Volunteers of America building is to be resurfaced and relined. The changes that will take place includes a narrow island of asphalt removed and four trees planted, concrete bumpers will be used near the trees, additional fencing, concrete curbs, removal of the metal sign box from the Globe and the black painted aluminum fence along Central Parkway to match existing fence on Elder Street.

Staff feels that the improvements to the area, the renovation of the structure, the services provide to the community, is in the interest of the historic conservation to grant a variance and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the off-street parking lot.

Mr. Tim Oosting, representing the tenants Mercy Health Partners was available to answer questions from the Board.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion Sullebarger, second Raser, Kirk abstained) to take the following action:

1. Grant a zoning variance for relief from the off-street parking requirements as per Chapter 1445-09 and 1425-19 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code finding that such relief from the literal implication of Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and:
 - a) Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the improvement to the parking lot including installation of the painted aluminum fence along Central Parkway and additional trees within the lot.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 2999 ANNWOOD AVENUE, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff Adrienne Cowden stated the property at 2999 Annwood Avenue sits on a knoll at the southwest corner of Dexter and Annwood Avenues in the East Walnut Hills Historic District in an area zoned SF-20. The applicant, Ms. Pamela Domitther, is present and requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances to install a 6'-0" tall decorative aluminum fence in the side and rear yards of the property.

Mr. Craig Decker, resident of 3048 Wold Avenue and Mr. Paul Perry, resident of 2969 Annwood Avenue attended the prehearing and are present to expressed their concerns in regards to style and height of the fence, the disturbance of the existing trees and the landscaping in characteristic of the district.

Staff believes a 6'-0" fence along street frontage is neither sympathetic nor compatible with the East Walnut Hills Historic District and approval of this fence will be detrimental applications for similar work and the fence does not warrant a Zoning Variance.

Ms. Pam Domither stated she would like a 6'-0" fence surrounding her backyard for the safety of her three children. She would even accept a 4'-0" fence with scallop, whatever it takes to appease the residents and stay in character with the historic district. Ms. Domither suggested to set the fence back three or four feet in her yard away from the trees.

Mr. Paul Perry stated his willingness to discuss a reasonable alternative with the applicant and along with Mr. Craig Decker, their issues with the fencing can be settled.

Mr. Senhauser stated he believes the applicant has a reasonable desire to compromise and work on the style of fence with staff and neighbors. Mr. Senhauser suggested that the Board should table the motion rather than deny the proposal.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously to table the discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____